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RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 5084
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2314
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RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4954
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 1619
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UNCLAS LA PAZ 000695

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR WHA/AND LPETRONI
BRASILIA FOR JSTORY
SAN JOSE FOR BLINK
USAID/LAC FOR JBISSON
USAID/EGAT FOR DMULLER AND CELRON
USAID/BOGOTA FOR BBAYLE
COMMERCE FOR JANGLIN

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TAGS: [SENV](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: BOLIVIA'S CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN: MITIGATE AND ADAPT

REF: LA PAZ 661

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (U) Bolivian efforts to address the potential impact of climate change (reftel) include both mitigation and adaptation strategies. While much of the country's five-year action plan has yet to be implemented, GOB officials accept evidence of climate change and appear committed to taking initial steps to prepare for a range of consequences. End summary.

BACKGROUND

[1](#)2. (U) Bolivia created its National Climate Change Program in 1995, with support from international and domestic experts. Its coordinator, Oscar Paz, has directed the program since its initiation, today overseeing an organization whose 25 Bolivian staff are charged not only with meeting Bolivia's commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, but also with devising a long-term national climate change strategy.

THE ACTION PLAN: MITIGATE AND ADAPT

[1](#)3. (U) Bolivian efforts to address the potential impact of climate change (reftel) include both mitigation and

adaptation strategies. According to Paz, who spoke to Econoff February 28, both are key components of a comprehensive five-year action plan that seeks to reduce Bolivia's vulnerability to the consequences of climate change. The GOB seeks not only to mitigate the impact of climate change by encouraging reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and placing increased emphasis on alternative energy sources, but also to adapt to the effects of climate change by encouraging behavioral and lifestyle modifications.

¶4. (U) Paz noted that vulnerability to climate change will vary by community, with populations' ability to cope shifting with geographic location, environmental conditions, population density, poverty levels, income distribution, food production capabilities, and access to health care. Some communities, Paz argued, will be more susceptible than others to the most immediate effects of climate change: more frequent droughts, harsher rainy seasons, and increasingly scarce and uncertain water supplies, which will affect populations' economic livelihoods and food supplies. Paz hopes to help communities adapt to already evident seasonal change by altering planting and harvesting timetables, not only on the altiplano of the west, but also in the lowlands of the east, where increasingly unpredictable weather, higher than normal temperatures, and new diseases have begun to affect crop yields.

¶5. (U) While much of Bolivia's action plan has yet to be implemented, GOB officials accept scientific and anecdotal evidence of climate change and appear committed to taking initial steps to prepare for a range of consequences. According to Paz, officials recognize that climate change poses a significant threat to long-term economic growth and

understand that they cannot make development plans without considering the potential impact of climate change. GOB officials may push for projects with more immediate, bigger results, Paz said, but most are generally receptive to policy recommendations; most, for example, support the pursuit of a variety of mitigation projects and advocate the preparation of a more detailed national adaptation plan.

COMMENT

¶6. (SBU) Mitigation and adaptation ostensibly carry equal weight in Bolivia's action plan, but Paz and his counterparts appear more concerned with adaptation; their preference may indicate a belief that climate change is an externality largely beyond Bolivia's control. Paz and his staff seem to have made a good start, but persistent shortages of financial and technical resources may hamper their efforts. End comment.
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